

Faith and Inspiration

Just the Right Word

"Communication is the problem to the answer," the old song philosophizes. Perhaps more accurately, effective communication is the problem. At present, we possess a multitude of technologies that make it possible to compose and transmit myriad forms of communication at the press of a button, touch of a screen, or sound of a voice.

Even given all that, societies continue to experience all manner of confusion and conflict among their populations in their attempts to engage with various communication media and platforms. Beyond the standard practices of "talking without speaking, hearing without listening," any effort to either moderate or liberate speech often leads to even further misunderstandings or misgivings. Clearly, comprehension remains one of the more challenging aspects of human communication.

Part of the cause for concern is the readily demonstrable yet sometimes denied or ignored effect of language and its use (or misuse). This impact can be observed by regarding the broad range of reactions, analyses, and responses that occur during any conversation, lecture, or speech, or that are provoked by any exchange of written or typed expression of thought. It appears that while we are a highly communicative species by design, human beings clearly possess a great capacity for misinterpretation.

Despite the somewhat quaint and well-intentioned adage of "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," the fact of the matter is that words can in fact cause different kinds of pain other than physical. They can impart genuine psychological, emotional, and even spiritual repercussions.

Human beings may often express themselves impulsively without full consideration or cognizance of the consequences of their words, serving to further illustrate some principles of Biblical truth regarding the words we wield.

The Scriptures unflinchingly identify the relationship between our application of language and our spiritual nature and condition. Throughout various verses, the Bible counsels us on regulating and gauging our words, keeping their impact and influence on others in mind. Among many things, we are told that rash words are dangerous, but wisdom can heal (Proverbs 12:18); a gentle response can counter animosity, but harsh words provoke it (Proverbs 15:1); the magnitude of our words can

amount to life or death (Proverbs 18:21); we will ultimately be accountable for what we say (Matthew 12:36); our speech reflects our inner being (Matthew 15:18).

The constituent components of language chosen to convey meaning do not merely inform or instruct, but can also inspire or induce all sort of emotions and actions — sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. Words do not originate from a void and are not somehow inherently "neutral," as some might claim, but rather typically reflect and represent assumptions, expectations, convictions, and desires that emanate from an internal source, whether we identify it as mind, heart, or soul.

It does not require much resourcefulness to realize that at the core of the

matter is the issue of our intentions manifesting verbally. Very often, people speak or write without fully appreciating the weight of words. Undoubtedly, society could benefit from more thoughtful communication. This not to say we should never speak our mind or should never risk offending sensibilities, nor does it mean we should avoid expressing and asserting truth when appropriate. Certainly, in our modern era of seeming hypersensitivity, it can be frustrating to merely express an authentic opinion or even an analytical observation or conclusion. We seem to exist in an oddly dichotomous space of urgent, hysterical tolerance that often fosters hesitant honesty.

Very often there are barriers to communication that might seem daunting or insurmountable. The need and desire to communicate clearly can often motivate or inspire extraordinary measures. In an episode of the "Star Trek: Enterprise" television series (prequel to the original "Star Trek"), the crew of the Enterprise NX-01 encounters a strange, large, amoeba-like creature that attempts to symbiotically merge with the ship and its people. As this clearly poses a significant danger, the crew members make a concerted effort to remove the entity through any means necessary. While security officer Reed prefers to resort to force, communications officer Hoshi, along with doctor Phlox, seek alternatives after analyzing the creature's biology.

PHLOX: Look at the synaptic activity. This organism possesses a very sophisticated nervous system. It could be capable of higher mental functions.

HOSHI: If it's intelligent maybe we can communicate with it. The frequency distortions, they look a lot like the phonetic patterns in certain Andorian dialects.

REED: With all due respect, Hoshi, we're not talking about nouns and verbs here. It could take you days to learn a language like that, even if it is one.

HOSHI: What other choice do we have? Give me a chance.

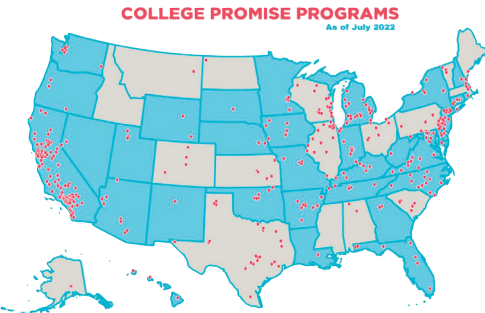
Through persistence, Hoshi manages to discover a means of modifying audio frequencies to which the creature responds, and they are able to persuade it to assist them in locating its home planet, where they can safely return it. Between any two parties, communication can be a challenge. It could seem to pose a quandary even for God.

Imagine God's situation: He creates this vast, amazing, intricate universe. He brings forth a dazzling array of creatures in an unfathomable display of creative power and virtuosity. He culminates his ingenious innovation with the advent of entities in his likeness, who are capable of sharing in his love and goodness. He gifts them with the ability to choose, to exercise volition. And throughout the entire history of this creation, these superlative and incomparable beings choose to continually reject his benevolence, deny his preeminence, and defy his guidance.

Despite all his efforts to communicate his love, compassion, and desire for fellowship, humanity doesn't seem to get the message. What kind of "social media" would allow God to fully express, clearly and without confusion, his intentions?

While God did provide his Word to us through inspired literary compositions we collectively refer to as Scripture, the full manifestation of his message of redemption was realized in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. From the beginning, God understood that the best way to sympathize and empathize with his creation was to in a very real sense become one with it, to partake of it in a practical and direct manner. By becoming "one of us," God leveraged the best opportunity to speak to us and show us the way. Jesus is God's ultimate communication to us — literally, the Word of the Lord.

In like manner, we, being in God's image, can operate as his "Word" as we live out the gospel. May we find ways to extend and improve our expression of God's love and grace through word and deed, to help ensure that communication is not the problem, but the means to say and be just the right word to others, leading them to the answer of redemption through Jesus.



MyPromise Connects Students with Millions in Funding for Postsecondary Education and Training

Imagine if college was as universal, free, and accessible as a high school education – for anyone, at any age.

To make this a reality, College Promise has released MyPromise (MyPromiseTool.org), the first student-centric, comprehensive, searchable database of Promise programs nationwide. They believe data needs to be placed directly in the hands of students, families, counselors, and community organizations that are advising learners and influencing their decisions about pursuing their education beyond high school.

“Students across the country benefit from Promise programs that not only lower the financial cost of postsecondary education but also provide wrap-around supports such as childcare, transportation, and/or mentors that enable them to thrive in college. MyPromise offers the opportunity to learn about their options and choose the Promise program that best meets their needs,” said Martha Kanter, CEO of College Promise.

“This project builds on our commitment to increasing equitable access to a high-quality postsecondary education for every American.”

MyPromise includes detailed information about the 350+ local and statewide Promise programs across the country. Designed to increase equity, many Promise programs have focused their efforts to support underrepresented populations, including DREAMers, parents, veterans, first-generation students, and adults with little or no postsecondary education or training.

College Promise programs span the nation, with programs available in 48 states and Washington, DC. Through an interactive map and robust search features, users can learn about all the College Promise programs available to them, bringing together for the first time a wealth of resources to connect students with funding and critical supports needed for success in our nation's colleges, universities, and career-technical programs.

This database includes key aspects of College Promise programs, including funding levels, eligibility requirements, and wrap-around supports.

Users can search by program name, school, or city for specific or localized programs.

A comparison tool allows students to select multiple programs side-by-side to ensure they find the best option for them. Additional capabilities will be deployed throughout 2022 and 2023.

The College Promise movement has experienced exponential growth over the last six years, through its focus on opportunity, equity, and supports to drive the economic, social, and civic prosperity of our nation.

For more information, visit MyPromiseTool.org.

Promise programs improve affordability, equity, and inclusion for postsecondary education while striving to reduce student debt in order to build a sustainable talent pipeline of Americans for the future. Learn more about the College Promise movement at www.CollegePromise.org

Learn all you can about your Social Security



Securing today and tomorrow

Question: How do I get a replacement Medicare card?
D. Russo, Miramar
Answer: Your Medicare card is proof of your Medicare insurance. If your Medicare card was lost, stolen, or destroyed, you can request a replacement with your personal my Social Security account. If you don't already have an account, you can create one online. Go to Sign In or Create an Account. Once you are logged in to your account, select the "Replacement Documents" tab. Then select "Mail my replacement Medicare card." Your Medicare card will arrive in the mail in about 30 days at the address on file with Social Security so be sure to make sure your mailing address is correct before completing the request.

If you need to know your new Medicare number now, you have some options. In your personal my Social Security account, you can get your Benefit Verification Letter, which includes your Medicare number. You can also visit Medicare.gov and sign in to see your Medicare number and print an official copy of your card. If you don't have a Medicare.gov account, go to Medicare.gov and select "Log In/Create Account". Then, follow the instructions. If you can't or prefer not to use the online service, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227 TTY 1-877-486-2048).

Question: Can I sign up for Medicare Part B if I am working and have health insurance through an

employer?
E. Rodriguez, Westchester
Answer: Choosing to sign up for Medicare is an important decision that involves a number of issues you may need to consider. The decision you make will depend on your situation and the type of health insurance you have. You may be able to delay signing up for Medicare Part B without a late enrollment penalty if you or your spouse (or a family member, if you're disabled) is working, and you're getting health insurance benefits based on current employment. In most cases, if you don't sign up for Part B when you're first eligible, you'll have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B. Coverage based on current employment does not include:

- COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act);
- Retiree health coverage;
- VA (Veterans Affairs) health coverage; or
- Individual health

coverage (like through the Health Insurance Marketplace).

Question: Will my Medicare premiums be higher because of my higher income?
F. Lima, Delray Beach
Answer: Some people with higher income may pay a larger percentage of their monthly Medicare Part B and prescription drug costs based on their income. We call the additional amount the income-related monthly adjustment amount. Visit Medicare Premiums: Rules For Higher-Income Beneficiaries to see if the adjustment amount applies to you.

Question: Can children and students get Social Security benefits?
H. Hennessee, Tamarac
Answer: When a parent receives Social Security retirement or disability benefits, their child may also receive benefits. Children may also get benefits when a parent dies. The child can be a biological

child, adopted child, or stepchild. A dependent grandchild also may qualify. To receive benefits, the child must:

- Be unmarried.
- Be younger than age 18.
- Be a full-time student (no higher than grade 12) 18 to 19 years old.
- Have a disability that started before age 22 and is 18 years or older

Question: If I get married, will it affect my benefits?
G. Westley, Plantation

Answer: If you get Social Security disability or retirement benefits and you marry, your benefit will stay the same. Here's how marriage may affect other benefits: Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- If you marry, your spouse's income and resources may change your SSI benefit; or
- If you and your spouse both get SSI, your benefit amount will change from an individual rate to a couple's rate. Benefits for a widow, di-

To submit an obituary or death notice, email wording and jpg photo to info@newsleadermail.com, 305-245-2311 Print deadline is Wednesday at noon.

Temple Hatikvah Homestead Jewish Center A Reform Congregation

183 NE 8th St., Homestead For information please call 305-454-4944 or visit www.thhjc.org



LESLE BURKHEAD 305-282-9603

List your home with me = SOLD Call for a free property analysis.



Call a **DEPENDABLE** Hometown Realtor that will work hard for you when you're buying or selling!

Now's the Time to Buy or Sell Market is Hot!

